

WAUKEGAN – U.S. Representative Mark Kirk and Waukegan Police Chief Bill Biang joined with community social service leaders today to announce additional resources for after school anti-gang programs in Lake County funded through a grant secured by Congressman Mark Kirk earlier this year. In February, Congressman Kirk announced a more than \$800,000 U.S. Department of Justice grant that he secured for a new Northern Illinois Gang Task Force to coordinate federal and local law enforcement agencies to combat violent drug gangs operating out of Waukegan. In addition to using the resources to target gang members, the Task Force will use a portion of the grant to fund programs for at-risk kids at Waukegan Public School District #60, the Northern Illinois Council Against Substance Abuse (NICASA), the Boys and Girls Club, the YMCA and the Family First Support Center of Lake County.

“With more than 2,000 gang members living north of Lake-Cook Road, we need to provide the resources to law enforcement to target these criminals,” Congressman Mark Kirk said. “But equally important is getting to kids before violent gangbangers do. These after school programs help give kids the support they need to say no to a life of drugs and guns. By taking a holistic anti-gang approach, we will open new doors for our kids and keep our communities safe.”

Joining Congressman Kirk and Chief Biang at Miguel Juarez Middle School were Waukegan Mayor Dick Hyde, Waukegan Public Schools District 60 Deputy Superintendent Jules Gaudin and School Board President June Maguire, Cesilie Pryce of the Boys and Girls Club, Bruce Johnson with NICASA, Dave Hayward with the Lake County YMCA, and Pastor John Caples and Evelyn Chenier with the Family First Support Center in Waukegan.

The Northern Illinois Task Force will disperse approximately \$330,000 to five community organizations, including:

- \$60,000 to NICASA for their TRACK (Taking Responsibility and Accepting Choices through Knowledge) program and their Parenting Journey program, a parent education and support program.
- \$50,000 to the Boys and Girls Club for their Street SMART (Skills Mastery and Resistance Training) program to help youth acquire the knowledge, skills, and self-confidence to resist gangs and violence.

- \$90,000 to the Lake County Family YMCA for their Spirit, Mind, and Body program, which targets at-risk middle school-aged youth by providing a safe environment to participate in various recreational, curricular, and self-awareness activities that highlight the four core values of the YMCA.
- \$30,000 to the Family First Center, which will employ their GRIP (Gang Resistance Intervention and Prevention) program providing at-risk youth with the tools needed for resisting gangs and other negative influences.
- \$100,000 to the Waukegan Middle School Athletic Program, which will provide fall, winter, and spring sports, with after school practice, games, and academic support, will keep the youth involved in positive recreation during peak hours for delinquency.

The programs will be funded through January 2010.

Congressman Kirk and local law enforcement have a long history of teaming up to target violent drug gangs. Most recently, Congressman Kirk, federal and local police launched the Most Wanted Gang Member List in March to raise the public profile of fugitive gang leaders. After newspapers, radio and television publicized the wanted criminals, tips flooded in to law enforcement agencies, resulting in the arrest of three gang leaders.